K. M. S.

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1463

COMMONER's REPLY

TO THE

Farmer's Occasional Letter.

DUBLIN:

Printed in the Year MDCCXLIX.

A Commoner's Reply, &c.

THERE are some Writers, who are secure from being answer'd, as Cowards are from being beaten, by their Weakness and Impudence. 'Tis as hard to confute no Reasoning as to fight no Body. And the Combat with Fools is of such an unlucky Nature, that the very Victory is dishonourable. Their Passions should have induced me to let the Farmer's Occasional Letter sleep in Peace with its more happy, as [illegible] Brethren, CATUS, TARPUS, TASSO, &c. with all the other heroick Shades [illegible] piral for forgotten Authors [illegible] had not been look'd on as the chief Strength of their weak Party, their chosen Champion, to oppose the hardest Attack yet made on their Patron Lucre. 'Tis the Value they put on him, not his intrinsick Merit that makes him worth Notice.

It can hardly be known, but by those who have tried it, what Drudgery it is to answer a dull Book. For, to answer, it is necessary one should read it. This would give a good Opinion of the Author's Reasoning, if not of his Genius: And to this the Hardship of unravelling intricate Nonsense; puzzling inconnected Reasoning, that's like a Duck in the Water, dives out of Sight when you would seize it, and appears again at a Distance, where you least expected it. And the Plague of forming into regular thing their allusive and confused Thoughts, when it is necessary we should shew they have any Meaning at all, before we can prove they have a wrong one. Yet such as it is we shall follow the Farmer as near as we can, through this intricate labyrinth.

First then: He has obligingly furnish'd his Commonplace Book, to shew us all the fine Things he had there collected on the Simplicity, Beauty, Nature, and Propriety

A Commoner's Reply, &c.

THERE are ſome Writers who are ſecure from being anſwer'd, as Cowards are from being beaten, by their Weakneſs and Inſignificance. It is as hard to confute no Reaſoning as ſtrong reaſoning: And the Combat with Fools is of ſuch an unlucky Nature, that the very Victory is diſhonourable. Theſe Reaſons ſhould have induced me to let the *Farmer's Occaſional Letter* ſleep in Peace with its more happy, as more innocent, Brethren, *GUSTAVUS, TASSO, Univerſal Beauty*, &c. with all the other heroick Shades that fill *F——r*'s charitable Hoſpital for forgotten Authors: If He had not been look'd on as the chief Strength of their weak Party, their choſen Champion, to oppoſe the hardeſt Attack yet made on their Patron *Lucas*. 'Tis the Value they put on him, not his intrinſick Merit that makes him worth Notice.

It can hardly be known, but by thoſe who have tried it, what Drudgery it is to anſwer a dull Book. For, to anſwer, it is neceſſary one ſhou'd read it. This wou'd give a good Opinion of the Author's *Patience*, if not of his *Genius*: Add to this the Hardſhip of unravelling intricate Nonſenſe; purſuing inconnected Reaſoning, that, like a *Duck* in the Water, dives out of Sight when you would ſeize it, and appears again at a Diſtance where you leaſt expected it. And the Plague of forming into ſomething their abortive and confuſed Thoughts, which it is neceſſary we ſhou'd ſhew have *any* Meaning at all, before we can prove they have a *wrong* one. Yet, ſuch as it is, we ſhall follow the *Farmer* as well as we can, *Studio fallente laborem.*

Firſt then: He has obligingly ranſack'd his *Common-place Book*, to ſhew us all the fine Things he had there collected on the *Simplicity, Beauty, Nudity, and Prettineſs*

of

of Virtue (Page 3). These are Things we have before heard before, and therefore thank him for the Inſtruction, but muſt diſſent in the Application, where he ſays, "That "*Virtue* never ſhines more than when undreſs'd of the "ſuperfluous Ornaments of Fortune, Honour, Titles, &c. (Page ib.). On the contrary, Prudence obliges us to ſuſpect thoſe who, from a low Station, would leap into high Offices, of a Deſign rather to enrich themſelves than ſerve the *Public*. But good Fortune, is, in ſome Meaſure, a Security for a Candidate's Behaviour; he has not the ſame Temptation, nor can his Conſtituents have the ſame Suſpicion of a Breach of Truſt. Suppoſe a poor Man, *Lucas* for Inſtance, elected Member of Parliament; the new Duty brings a greater Neglect of his firſt Buſineſs, and that, in Conſequence, a greater Poverty; while the Acceſs of Grandeur creates an Expence the very Office diſables him to ſupport. What Refuge then? Is not here the Patriot's Honeſty ſorely attack'd. There is no Medium between *ſtarving* himſelf, and *ſelling* you. And will you believe any Laws will bind againſt *Neceſſity*, which is ſaid to have no Law? eſpecially as he has ſufficiently ſhewn himſelf not Proof againſt a Bribe. Your Notions (Mr. *Farmer*) of Virtue are very pretty, but ill-placed. You ought to have ſent them to ſome *School* in Town; the Boys wou'd have thank'd you for *Themes*, and you wou'd have eſcaped the Ridicule of the few that read you. But tho', in this Point, we have diſſented, we ſhall agree the better for it in others: That "*Nature has been as bountiful to* Lucas, "*as Fortune has been frugal*," (Page ib.) I grant, of her choice Gifts of Impudence, Obſtinacy, Ribaldry, and Diſſimulation, which, as you well obſerve, "have re-"ceived little or no Diſtinction from his Birth and Em-"ployment, and ſtill leſs from Education," (*Page* ib.), and that, with theſe Gifts, "*he has impudently, and un-*"*ſought, thruſt himſelf among his Betters*," (Page ib.) I as readily agree to. "That his *Patriotiſm* is of a very *peculiar* "*Nature*," (Page ib.) is but too true, and ſuch as never

paſſed

passed in any Country but this, for such, since the Creation. That it is "*wholly internal*" (Page 3.) is as right, since he never yet gave any outward Sign but of the direct contrary: And that it is never likely to receive any considerable "*Acquisition*" looks like a Prophecy. But, tho' I agree with you in these Points, yet nothing pleases me so much, or makes me so willing to forgive all you have said, as your wise Assertion, that, "*Tho' he, after Election, "should betray us, yet we will have gain'd infinite Advan-"tages.*" (Page 6.)

Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia delphis!

An Oracle could not have spoken better! We will *then* learn to distinguish false from true Patriotism, and the Vulgar, who can but be taught by sad Experience, will never more trust cunning, factious Knaves under that fallacious Mask.

What Pity 'tis we cannot, any longer, proceed in this Harmony! but you must run into such Mistakes, that, tho' never so well inclined, 'tis impossible for one to agree with you. You seem to think you could not join *Lucas* without espousing all his Blunders, Inconsistencies, and Nonsense; else why insult the Miseries of this Kingdom, by telling us, "That the Eyes of all *Europe* are upon us? "that we are the only free People in it? and that all "Nations expected their Liberty, through our Means?" Did you not fear to raise the Indignation of all your Countrymen against you? knowing, that an extravagant, ill-placed *Panegyrick* is the worst *Satyr?* And, to crown all, thus do you reason: *Europe* must have its Freedom from *Ireland*, and *Ireland* from *Charles Lucas*. What a dirty Tail does your Induction end in! How much was the gentle Reader surprized, in reading the *Memoirs of* P. P. *Clerk of the Parish*, to find that all the great Actions, that he vainly attributed to *Ormond*, *Harley*, *Bolinbroke* were really owing to none other than *Robert Jenkins* Farrier, *Amos Turner*, Collar maker, *&c.*

Such, and so great, will be the Surprize of *Europe*, when

when the *Farmer's* Writings (which are to ſpread the *Barber's* Patriotiſm) inform it of this great Man! What Awmazement! never before to have heard of him? Nor will their Wonder be any Thing abated to find the Perſon, to whom they are to owe their future Freedom, is no other than *CHARLES LUCAS, Free Citizen of* Dublin, *and Apothecary!* Alas! *BROOKE*, you have this in common with all Men of weak Heads, That the very Means you uſe to raiſe yourſelf, are the moſt effectual in the World to ſink you, and that, in endeavouring to ſupport *Lucas's* tottering Reputation, you have loſt the little you had yourſelf. Like the *Perſians*, *Juſtin* mentions, who, while they ſtrove to revenge their Friends, were themſelves the firſt ſlain.

What Patience can be tame enough to enter into an Examen of your *Rants*, your canting *Tub Oratory*; that ſtrange Style of yours that knows not how to expreſs any Thing *natural*, and *eaſy*; and your fighting with the Wind, which ſeems rather to exerciſe your Lungs, than advance your Cauſe; reſerving the Point in Queſtion to the laſt, which then you purpoſely miſtake; and, inſtead of ſticking to the Point, you run on the Reputation of Mr. *Morgan*, whom you "*who wou'd not hurt any Man* "*alive*," blacken all you can. Can you be ignorant that his Character, or Oath, avail you not at all, whether true or falſe. *Lucas's* Charge, was, "That the Commons "were, as uſual, but *partially ſummon'd*, to ſerve ſiniſter "Ends of the Aldermen." He, in his Charge, did not mention Mr. *Morgan*; his Accuſation was not againſt him, but the *Aldermen*. If he had a Charge on him, why did he not complain of him particularly? The Points he and you ſhould have ſtuck to, in his Defence, as no other touch'd him, were theſe: He ſhould have proved, *Firſt*, That, by undue Influence, the Commons were, in a late Aſſembly, and, as uſual, but partially ſummon'd, to ſerve ſome End of the Aldermen. *Secondly*, That the

Teſtimony

Teſtimony of the Commons, declaring that they had been duly ſummon'd, is falſe. To have proved this, indeed, wou'd have ſerved him, but he quite paſſes it by, and turns to a Thing which no Way affects his Cauſe, the Character of Mr. *MORGAN*. This he, and you, ſtruggle which ſhall moſt blacken. He (you I ſhall conſider preſently) produces for that End, a Piece of a Journal, importing, that he *(Morgan)* had ſome Upholſterer's Goods made by a Turner; together with two or three Aſſeverations, that, in former Times, (God knows when) the Accuſer had not been duly ſerved; when his Charge was for a late Fault. They don't pretend to ſay it proceeded from any Deſire of the Aldermen, but thro' Neglect of the Officer, of his Deputies. Were we to defend him we ſhould be as much out of our Way, as *Lucas* and the *Farmer* in attacking him; as it only ſerves to turn our Eyes from the main Point, which is certainly their Deſign in ſticking to it. The *Patriot* ſays, "he had not Time to collect Evidence of "his Aſſertion." So then, by his own Confeſſion, he charged boldly, and look'd for Evidence afterwards. And how much to the Purpoſe thoſe are, which he has got, let every one judge. His Arguments carry their own Confutation, and prove nothing but the old Obſervation, *That a bad Cauſe is made worſe by Defence.*

Now, Mr. *Farmer*, your Arguments are ſtill weaker than his; your idle Diſtinction between a *Suppoſition*, and *Aſſertion*, is too childiſh to be noticed. How much does it mend the Matter; inſtead of ſaying a Man is a Rogue, that you ſuppoſe him to be a great Villain. Your Inſtance of a Servant is ſtill more unhappy. What does that Servant deſerve, that goes by Lies, and idle Reports, to ſet his Maſter, and his Friends, at Variance? Yet this *Lucas*, this Servant, according to you, were guilty of no leſs Crime than high Treaſon, if he did not alarm the City with idle, and, to ſay no worſe of them, uncertain Reports. This is He "*that will purge our Legiſlature of* "*Groſſneſs, will find a Reſtorative for the Nation, and*

"*ſublime*

" *ſublime us to Notions of Virtue,*" (Page 4.) Thus (ſays the *Former*) did we rally, — and miſerably you rallied! Who ſees any Humour in this Raillery?

Riſu inficeto inficetior res nulla eſt.

What is more inſipid than inſipid Mirth?

What you mention of *Ordeal* Combat, *&c.* puts me in mind of *Cæſar*'s Queſtion to a Perſon, who read as ill as you write; which may, with little Alteration, be applied to you, " *Are you in Earneſt, or do you Joke? If you Joke,* " *you Joke vilely.*" Indeed, yours is good writing inverted; when you are ſober, you make us laugh; and with your Laughter you make us ſad. The Parentheſes in *Morgan*'s Affidavit " *you arch Wag*" (Page 12) which you think ſo *merry* made yourſelf laugh too much to leave any for us; ſo that we look on it in a ſort of a doubt, whether it excels moſt in Malice, or Dulneſs.

How good is your Declaration to the *Commons*, That if they will retract what they have ſaid, and own that their *Advertiſement*, inſtead of *Lucas*'s *Pamphlet*, is falſe, malicious, and ſcandalous, you will endeavour to get their Pardon! this you did to mollify the terrible Appearance you made, when ſingle, you ſtood forth their Accuſer, and bared your doughty Breaſt to all the Arrows they could ſend.

And leſt we ſhould deſpair hearing more from you, you promiſe us your Hiſtory of *JOHN GOOD.* If you are an honeſt well meaning Man, I would adviſe you to lay aſide your Pen, and, by a timely Retreat, ſave the little remains of your little Reputation. If not, I can wiſh you nothing worſe than to go on.

I am, Sir, Yours,

6 DE 58 S. M.

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